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Borneo June 10 1892

J. F. Campbell
Nicheley Lodge
Bursington
London
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led in
the month
of June,
1881

J. F. Pamphell Esq. of Islay.
With best compliments.

African Folk-lore.

II.

CONTRIBUTIONS IN ZULU.

THE accompanying specimens of Native traditional literature were sent down, last year, from the Zulu country to the Grey Library, by the Rev. H. I. Shildrick, of St. Andrews, Lower Tugela Drift. They were forwarded to him by a lady, whose name is at present unknown to us, but who is described by the contributor as being in every way competent to forward the work of collection. They were originally unaccompanied by an English translation, which has now, however, kindly been supplied by the Rev. Wm. Ireland, of the American Mission Society in Natal, who has at the same time sent us down two Zulu "Nursery Tales," collected, as well as translated, by one of his Native teachers. One of these "Nursery Tales" appears to contain a trace of the influence of Bushman ideas; and it is hoped that both of them may be published at no distant date.

Of the first of the two longer pieces forwarded by Mr. Shildrick, and given below, a portion appears to be wanting. This is not unfrequently found to be the case in such Native relations; and, in the present instance, it is possible that this want may hereafter be supplied in some other version of the curious "*isaga*" referred to. With regard to the "Fox's Pool," mentioned in the Story of *Unanana*, it has, as yet, been impossible to obtain any satisfactory explanation.

For the information of Zulu scholars, it will be as well to add that the orthography of the original Zulu text has been left altogether untouched, as there was no one at hand to whose judgment any apparently doubtful point could satisfactorily be referred:—

ISAGA.

Welia Robe,
Hamba siyoteza.
Mus' angiyikuya.
Ngakandwa isife,
Emazibukweni.
Kwapuma 'ngingila,
Engango xamu.
Xamu leroqoza,
Iziziba zide,
Emazibukweni.
Nondind' avuke.
Ngivuke njani?
Ngibulewe nje,
Abafana bakwa Tabete.
Tabete mupi?
Tyay' inkabi le.
Indindize, ngokawana.
Iti, Maye! Maye!
Amatole api?

A POETIC FABLE.

"Return, O pigeon!
Come let us go and get firewood."
"No, I cannot go,
I have been bruised in a trap,
At the fords.
My gizzard came out,
It was as large as an iguana's,
An iguana, running down,
By the long ponds,
At the fords."
"O pigeon! Get up."
"How shall I get up?
I am just killed,
By the boys of Tabete."
"Which Tabete?"
"Strike the ox,
That he may cross over the ridge."
Said the ox, "Alas! alas!
Where are the calves?"

ISAGA.

Uzodhlani?
 Umqadodo.
 Uzoumbapi?
 Emva kwendhlu ka Fede.
 Ufede angakutyayi ini ngenduku
 yake egwecezamagwece?
 Ngahamba, ngakamba, ngahlangana
 namagwababa emabili.
 Sati elinye, "Vuk' uvutete,"
 Ngipandhliwe dadeshane!

A POETIC FABLE.

"What will you eat?"
 "Umqadodo." *
 "Where will you dig it?"
 "Behind the house of Fede."
 "Will not Fede beat you with his
 cane that is so very crooked?"
 "I went on, I went on, I met two
 crows."
 Said one, "Get up and blow the fire."
 "Oh dear me! but I was badly beaten!"

INGANEKWANE.

Kwati, Unanana ezalele abanta bake, bebatatu. Kwafik' isibankwa, sati, "Ngikubonisele abanta bako na?" Wavum' Unanana. Wababeka esilulwini, wabashiya, wayakuzingela. Kwat' eschambile Unanana, isibankwa salal' ubutongo. Kwafik' ingutye, yabadhla yabaqeda abanta baka Nanana, swaca. Savuk' isibankwa salunguza esilulwini, sabafunyana bengeko. Sakala, simemeza Unanana, siti:—

"Nanana! Nanana!
 Wenanana!
 Abanta bako badhliwe,
 Wenanana!
 Badhliwe ingutye,
 Wenanana!
 Isiyangibuzabuza,
 Wenanana!"

Wati Unanana, "Utini we sibankwa?" Sati isibankwa, "Ngiti,
 Nanana! Nanana!
 Wenanana!
 Abanta bako badhliwe,
 Wenanana!
 Badhliwe ingutye,
 Wenanana!
 Isiyangibuzabuza,
 Wenanana!"

Unanana wakala, wetyat 'isilulu emhlane, wati,
 "Ngilal' endhlcleni,
 Ngilal' endhlcleni,
 Ngibonisel' ingutyiash,
 Umtanami!"

Yati, ingutye,

"Umtanak' ukude,
 Emacibin' engutya-ye,
 Lapa liduma lingani-ye,
 Siti ukuyinayin' amazolo-ye."

Wati Unanana,

"Ngilal' endhlcleni,
 Ngilal' endhlcleni,
 Au! ngutye,
 Ngibonisel' umtanami!"

Yati, ingutye,

“Kuzwa ini ? Ngiti,
Umntanak ’ukude,
Emacibin’ engutya-ye,
Lapa liduma lingani-ye,
Situkuyinayin’ amazolo-ye.”

Ingutye yatata no Nanana, yamgwinya, kwati mimiliti, kwati mimiliti.

A NURSERY TALE.

It happened that *Unanana* had given birth to three young ones. There came along a Lizard, and said, “Let me look after your young ones.” “Agreed,” said *Nanana*. She put them in the grain-crib, and left them, and went a-hunting. When *Unanana* had gone, the Lizard went to sleep. There came along a Fox, and eat up entirely the young ones of *Nanana*. So, when the Lizard awoke, and peeped into the grain-crib, it found them missing. It cried, and shouted out to *Nanana*, saying :

“O Nanana ! O Nanana !
Alas ! O Nanana !
Your children are eaten up,
Alas ! O Nanana !
They are eaten up by a Fox,
Alas ! O Nanana !
And still he is asking me,
Alas ! O Nanana ! ”

To which *Nanana* replied, “What say you ? O Lizard ! ” The Lizard replied, “ I say :

O Nanana ! O Nanana !
Alas ! O Nanana !
Your children are eaten up,
Alas ! O Nanana !
They are eaten up by a Fox,
Alas ! O Nanana !
And still he is asking me,
Alas ! O Nanana ! ”

Unanana cried ; then took up the grain-crib on her shoulder, saying :

“ I sleep in the road,
I sleep in the road,
Show me, O Fox !
My child.”

Said the Fox :

“ Your child is far away,
In the Fox’s pool, so there !
Where it thunders, but does not rain, so there !
Where it distils like dew, so there ! ”

Nanana said :

“ I sleep in the road,
I sleep in the road,
You old Fox, you !
Show me my child ! ”

The Fox said :

“ Do you not hear me say ?
Your child is far away,
In the Fox's pool, so there !
Where it thunders, but does not rain, so there !
Where it distils like dew, so there ! ”

Then the Fox fell upon *Nanana*, and swallowed her up, and so she went smoothly down her throat.

IGAMA.

Impukan' iyageza-e-e-e-
Aidhl' abanta' bayo-e-e-e-

A SONG.

The fly is washing itself, -e-e-e-
Let it eat up its young ones, -e-e-e-

That it should be generally speaking too much the fashion in South Africa, at the present day, to deem such products of the native mind and of the distinct national life as are contained in the various traditional literatures of our aborigines to be unworthy of representation and preservation, is greatly to be deplored. It is, indeed, true, that with too many of us, in our busy colonial existence, the actual time which we could devote to such a task may be wanting. But the greatest hindrance to any satisfactory exertion in this direction lies in the fact that, by the majority of European residents, the matter is considered to be wholly undeserving of attention ; and, as the inevitable consequence of such a view, the work of preserving from obliteration the interesting aboriginal literatures which exist upon every side of us is, too generally speaking, held to be utterly unworthy our execution. But, while these rich products of the native mind are thus frequently set aside as too “ foolish,” or too trivial, to merit attention, there are still a few workers whose exertions in this direction have won for them a claim to the hearty gratitude of all those who desire that no human race should vanish from the earth, wholly unrepresented in the history of humanity. Among those now living of this little band of workers, are particularly to be mentioned Bishops Steere and Callaway, the Rev. L. Dahle (of the Norwegian Mission in Madagascar), and Mr. G. M. Theal, of Lovedale. The volume of “ *Amaxosa Folk-lore*,” projected by the lastmentioned writer has, however, not yet been printed, on account of the small measure of support hitherto accorded to it.

The above small specimens of Zulu Native Literature are here printed, not only for the sake of their intrinsic interest to students of Comparative Folk-lore, but because it is hoped that their perusal may incite other residents in South Africa, who are able and willing to do so, to lend a helping hand in the work of collecting and recording what is so swiftly passing beyond our ken, and in gathering what may still be gathered of the ideas, thoughts, and beliefs of the

aboriginal races among whom we live, as represented in their already fast disappearing traditional lore. For, while we doubt, and hesitate, and think thus lightly of the opportunity still within our grasp, such products of the mental life of the aborigines as might even yet be rescued from destruction, are passing away from us for ever!

We do not now merely refer to the fact that, here in South Africa, among our aboriginal neighbours, there exists a rich and varied native traditional lore, with which we have it in our power to rejoice the hearts and assist the labours of that section of the scientific world which has taken for its object the investigation of comparative Folk-lore; nor yet to the excellent practical results which a truer acquaintance with the languages and mental life of our various native neighbours would be likely to afford, both to them and to ourselves, in our necessarily mutual relations; although this is surely a matter of no small moment for every dweller in South Africa at the present day. We are not alone dwellers in South Africa. We form part of a still larger society, in which we have ourselves inherited enormously from the labours of past generations. We, in our turn, can now gather up stores of precious material towards the yet unwritten history of humanity, as well as for the scientific workers of the present day. And, situated as we are, the incontrovertible truth, that the faithful reflection of the aboriginal mind and habits of life as displayed in its national traditional literature, affords material of the highest importance in the study of humanity itself, imposes upon us a heavy responsibility. Yet, the unfortunate fact, incredible as it may appear in the eyes of European scholars, that the work of collecting the traditional lore of our aborigines, as recorded by themselves in their own language and words, is still believed by so many in South Africa to be possessed of no practical value or importance whatsoever, is in itself—as has been already stated—one of the strongest hindrances to its execution. More than three years ago, the late Curator of the Grey Library urged upon the then Colonial Government the necessity for a speedy and organized effort to stimulate the collection of the fast-vanishing treasures that surround us.

“And is it to be assumed,” says Dr Bleek, in the letter* referred to, “that nations such as the Kafirs and their kindred races (Bechuana, Damara, &c.), and even the Hottentots, who all generally speaking so far exceed the Bushmen in civilization, in political organization, and in forensic oratory, should possess a traditionary literature so inferior in value to that of the Bushmen, as not to be worthy the trouble of being taken down and preserved? Nay, though very different perhaps in character, it is clear from what has been already collected, that the folk-lore of all these nations is of great scientific importance,—of first-rate importance for a correct knowledge of the native languages, and indispensable, if a true record is to remain of the original workings of the native mind, and of the ideas inherited from their ancestors, as well as of the spiritual state in which they were before the advent of Christian Missionaries. That to ignore this pre-Christian world of ideas would be an act of injustice to these Missionaries, is the emphatic opinion of their true friend, Sir George Grey.” * * * *

* Letter to the Hon. Ch. Brownlee, Esq., late Secretary for Native Affairs, prefixed to Dr. Bleek's “Second Report concerning Bushman Researches,” Cape Town, 1875.

After quoting from the preface to Sir George Grey's collection of Poetry of the New Zealanders (*Ko nga Moteatea*, &c., New Zealand, 1853, p. vi.), Dr. Bleek continues as follows :—

"But if we look around us in South Africa to see what has thus been done to preserve the original mental products of its highly interesting indigenous races, how little do we find accomplished ! It is only in Natal that a really large collection of native folk-lore has been made by the Rev. Dr. H. Callaway, now Bishop of St. John's. Among our Frontier Kafirs a few legends were collected by two natives, both since deceased, namely, Wm. Kekale Kaye (whose manuscripts form part of Sir George Grey's gift), and the Rev. Tiyo Soga ; but of the collections of the latter very little has been saved,—several pieces having apparently been mislaid or made away with at the time of his premature death. Of the rich treasures of Setshuana folk-lore we obtain some glimpses in Casalis ("Etudes," &c.), but very little in this language has as yet been accurately taken down from the lips of the natives. And although the collections of native literature in Hottentot and Damara (Otyihereró), made by the Revs. Messrs. J. G. Krönlein and J. Rath, are very valuable, yet they comprise only a very small portion of what could be given in these languages.

"You know, Sir, that in none of these other languages are there now such preliminary difficulties to be encountered as we have had to overcome in Bushman, all of them having been studied and written down by Missionaries for years past. As there are thus Europeans to be met with (Missionaries or their children), and even Natives, who understand and are able to write fluently in these native languages (Kafir, Setshuana, Otyihereró, and Namaqua Hottentot),—we can be sure that with some encouragement many persons might be induced to devote some time and strength to the collection of the folk-lore of the nations among whom they are respectively living, *i tera kaumatua, i tera kuia*, 'from this old man, from that old woman' (beginning of motto to Sir G. Grey's Poetry of the New Zealanders). But this must be undertaken at once, or it will be too late, if we want to retain pictures of the native mind in its national originality. Even now it is maintained by some observers that, as regards our Frontier Kafirs, it is already too late ; but I believe that you, Sir, will agree with me in thinking that it is still possible to gather some portions of their old traditionary lore, although much of it may already have sunk into oblivion. The case is similar with the Bechuana and Hottentots (Namaqua and Koranna) on the borders of our Colony.

"We may, indeed, congratulate ourselves that we are still in the position by prompt and energetic measures to preserve, not merely a few 'sticks and stones, skulls and bones,' as relics of the aboriginal races of this country, but also something of that which is most characteristic of their humanity, and, therefore, most valuable,—their mind, their thoughts, and their ideas.

"What would not the coming generations of colonists give, if they could have opportunities such as ours for penetrating into the minds of the original inhabitants of this country ! To understand this in some degree, one need only observe with what care the inhabitants of those countries in which the aboriginal population has quite disappeared, collect every scrap of information possible regarding them. Yet, wherever, as in Tasmania, this has not been done at the proper time, how very scanty, unreliable, and unsatisfactory is all that, with the utmost effort, can be brought together !

"There is, perhaps, no other country which like this Colony, with its three native races (Kafirs and their kindred,—Hottentots,—and Bushmen), still contains at the present day such divergent, and at the same time, such primitive types of aboriginal nations, languages, and forms of mind. On this account it is, scientifically speaking, of exceeding importance *not* to allow the mental life of the aborigines in its uninfluenced primitiveness to become quite effaced, without making an effort to preserve an image of it, fixed in the truest manner in their own words. By making such an effort it is clear that we erect an enduring

monument of the early mental and intellectual condition of our country, a monument worthy both of an enlightened Government and of a most prosperous period in our colonial history. Nor will this claim any large outlay. A sum not exceeding a one-thousandth part of the annual revenue of this Colony, set aside for this purpose would, no doubt, go a good way towards the expenses of collecting, translating, and publishing a fair portion of the national traditional literature of our aborigines.

Thus far Dr. Bleek. But, owing to various circumstances, among which is to be included his death, which occurred but a few months after the publication of the letter now referred to, no apparent result has followed the earnest representation thus made by him. The chief obstacle has, again, but too probably been, that the matter has not been considered to be one sufficiently worthy of attention. And, as he, who would have continued to urge its claims upon the notice of the Colonial authorities, is no longer in bodily presence among us, it has apparently fallen unnoticed to the ground. Times have changed with us, and we are now in one of the "lean" years of our Colony; but still something may be accomplished, even by individual exertion, until the Government is able itself to take the matter officially in hand. We can hardly fear that, with the authoress of "Old Deccan Days" herself in our midst, the literature of our Native Races can continue to meet with that general disregard which has hitherto most unfortunately been accorded to it. It is, indeed, possible that a section of our lately-established Philosophical Society, under the presidency of His Excellency the Governor, may think it well to take this matter somewhat in hand; and that the history of the "Sibylline Books," as we used to hear it related, with burning hearts, in our childish days, may not see itself altogether repeated at the present hour in South Africa.

L.

cat gave him none, only the skin was given to the rat. Then the cat cut up the rest of the flesh, salted it, and sewed it up in a basket, hanging it to dry above the door-post, and went again to hunt.

And when the cat had departed on the hunt, say they, the rat made a hole through the basket, and ate up every bit of the meat (*kitoza*). And when the cat returned from hunting, he spoke and said, "I'll fetch some of the meat for my supper." But when he got it (the basket) down, there was not any to be seen. So he was extremely angry, and chased the rat, but the rat ran into the hole which he had dug, and so escaped. Then the cat cursed the rat, and said, "While my race lasts, these rats must be destroyed." And this is the reason why the rats are devoured by the cats. (*Angano na Arira*, No. 55, pp. 301 and 302.)

THE VAZIMBA.

It is believed that there was, in former times, a race called *Vazimba*, and this is the description of them: small of stature, with small heads: and men say that at the present time there are some of them dwelling on the West Coast.

(En) of
Dr. Bleek's
letter
omitted
here, ex-
amined,

like in the "Afr. Monthly Magazine," Vol. XVI.,
No. 96, for April 1878.)

17th Decr - 1878.

In this as usual the hearts act
the hearts of men. In this
case ~~the~~ stupid hearts without
meaning. There are low caste
fables and therefore genuine
as I suppose.

J. Campbell
Middlebury College
Vermont

Colony.

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J. F. Campbell of Glasgow Esq.
With her compliments

AFRICAN FOLK-LORE.

THREE MADAGASCAR TALES.

THE following short specimens of the folk-lore of Madagascar have kindly been translated for us by Miss Cameron, who acquired a knowledge of the Malagasy language during her residence on that Island. The originals are contained in a work entitled "Specimens of Malagasy Folk-lore," edited by the Rev. L. Dahle, of the Norwegian Mission in Madagascar, and published at Antananarivo last year. As this important contribution towards our knowledge of the native literature of the Malagasy is, at present, unaccompanied by any translation which could bring its contents within the reach of ordinary students, it is with particular pleasure that we thus see ourselves enabled, with Mr. Dahle's kind permission, to publish even these few stories from his Collection, for those in South Africa and elsewhere to whom they will be an object of interest.

THE WILD CAT AND THE RAT.

The wild cat and the rat were playing together: the rat was house-keeper, and the cat was the hunter. The cat was away on the chase, and the rat had dug a hole in the earth, but the cat did not understand the idea of the rat. Then the pair of them had a consultation, and they agreed to go and steal an ox.

So they went to steal, it is said, and got a fine fatted ox; but the rat was cheated by the cat,—the flesh was taken for himself, and the bones were given to the rat. And when they had both eaten, there was still much remaining uneaten; so the rat asked for some of the flesh, but the cat gave him none, only the skin was given to the rat. Then the cat cut up the rest of the flesh, salted it, and sewed it up in a basket, hanging it to dry above the door-post, and went again to hunt.

And when the cat had departed on the hunt, say they, the rat made a hole through the basket, and ate up every bit of the meat (*kitoza*). And when the cat returned from hunting, he spoke and said, "I'll fetch some of the meat for my supper." But when he got it (the basket) down, there was not any to be seen. So he was extremely angry, and chased the rat, but the rat ran into the hole which he had dug, and so escaped. Then the cat cursed the rat, and said, "While my race lasts, these rats must be destroyed." And this is the reason why the rats are devoured by the cats. (*Angano na Arira*, No. 55, pp. 301 and 302.)

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It is believed that there was, in former times, a race called *Vazimba*, and this is the description of them: small of stature, with small heads: and men say that at the present time there are some of them dwelling on the West Coast.

in the "Afr. Monthly Magazine," vol. XVI,
No 96, for April 1878.)

These people rose up to make sport at the waterside, and they caught the animal called *Fananimpitoloha* (Seven-headed Hydra) ; then passed by the serpent called *Tompondrano*, and a *Vazimba* sent it on a message, saying, "Go say to my parents, 'Thus saith *Ravazimba* your son : I am gone down below the water, and I send to bid you good-bye ; send, therefore, the blood of some living creature, with its feet, its fur, and its fat, and if ye do this, ye shall be blessed.'" So the serpent went his way.

And this is why these serpents are called *Tompondrano* (Lord of the water) by some. It is thought that the *Vazimba* bestowed power upon them, and scarcely any are found daring enough to kill this reptile.

Some time afterwards the *Vazimba* sent the *Vintsy* (a small blue bird) to his parents, saying, "Greet my parents for me, and say to them, 'Thus saith *Ravazimba*, Send me fowls and sheep.'"

And when the *Vintsy* had told his errand, he departed, and returned again to *Ravazimba*, who said to him, "Because you have been diligent and wise, I bestow honour upon you ; I will place upon your head a crown of glory, and I will array you in blue, day and night. When you have young, I will rear them, and those who seek to kill you I will slay in their youth." This, it is believed, is the origin of the beauty of this bird ; and this is why we always find their nests at the water's edge. Until this day, there are not many people bold enough to kill or to eat the *Vintsy*, and some firmly believe this tale, and pay great deference to the little bird called *Vintsy*.

Many of the inhabitants of Imerina have besought the *Vazimba*, saying, "If thou wilt prosper me, or if I am cured of this my sickness, or should my children or my wife have offspring," &c., &c., "then I will revere thee, anoint thee with ointment, and slay sheep and fowls in offerings unto thee." (*Angano na Arira*, No. 44, pp. 294 and 295.)

THE SONGOMBY.*

The *Songomby*, it is said, is a large and fleet-footed animal, about the size of an ox. Some say that it devours human beings. In past times, though not so long ago, it was the opinion of people in the South that the horse was the *Songomby* of countries at the other side of the water. And this, say they, is the way in which people in those countries were accustomed to trap the animal : A crying child was placed bound, near the mouth of the *Songomby's* den, and when the animal heard the crying of the child, it came out, and was trapped. And, in like manner, said they (the people of the South), if we set traps we shall catch *Songomby* to be our horses. Near our town, says the person who tells of this, is a cave, where folks say that there are some of these animals. If they see a man they are sure to attack him, and although the female does not fight savagely, yet she incites the male, and keeps up with him in the attack. One story tells of a man who was journeying by night, and met with one of the *Songomby*. Fierce was the combat, which lasted until near morning, between that man and the *Songomby* ; but, as the man was very powerful, he was not devoured by the animal. This, they say, is a sure testimony to prove the existence of the *Songomby*. Another tale is of a troublesome child who was turned out of doors by his parents, and would certainly have been eaten by the *Songomby*, had not some people hastened to the

* This piece is from the Betsileo.

rescue. Still another story tells of a naughty child who was turned out of the house with these words from his parents: "See here, *Songomby*, this is yours!" Then came the *Songomby* in truth, and the child cried out, "Look! look! it is really here!" But the parents replied, "Let it eat you, then" (thinking that the child was speaking falsely). After a little while they opened the house door, but the child was no longer there. Then the parents and others from the town hastened with torches to search for the child; and there they saw the traces of the child's blood along the road. They went on and on to the end of the road, which brought them to the *Songomby's* den. Many other stories are related by the people, bearing testimony to the existence of the *Songomby*. (*Sampon-javatra sasany mahagaga*, No. 1, pp. 99 and 100.)

L.



